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FM AMEMBASSY LISBON

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INFO RUCNAFG/AFGHANISTAN COLLECTIVE

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C O N F I D E N T I A L LISBON 002765

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 12/10/2018

TAGS: MOPS PGOV PREL AF PO

SUBJECT: PORTUGAL TO SEND MEDICAL UNIT TO AFGHANISTAN

REF: A. LISBON 2379

1B. LISBON 2595

Classified By: DEPUTY POL/ECON COUNSELOR TROY FITRELL FOR REASONS 1.4 (b, d)

11. (C/NF) Jorge Roza de Oliveira, Diplomatic Adviser to Portuguese Prime Minister Jose Socrates, told us December 5 that Portugal would provide additional contributions to the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) in Afghanistan in the wake of the Portuguese C-130's December 2008 departure.

12. (C/NF) Roza de Oliveira said that Portugal would provide a medical team to the Kabul Airport hospital for all of calendar year 2009. The medical team would consist of three four-month deployments of 15 personnel. Roza de Oliveira also told us that there was no established withdrawal date for the current Portuguese Operational Mentoring and Liaison Team (OMLT) that was expected to depart this month. The deployment date for the second promised Portuguese OMLT is under evaluation, but Roza de Oliveira stressed that it was a separate deployment and not a replacement for the existing OMLT.

Comment

13. (C/NF) We had previously reported on the possibility of a medical team deployment, but are pleased that the required planning and execution is so far along. Portuguese politicians, including the Foreign and Defense Ministers, have made vague promises of additional ISAF contributions linked to a request from the new U.S. administration, but officials have privately noted that additional combat forces are unlikely before the Portuguese elections in autumn 2009. We will continue to push for an early deployment date for the second OMLT.

STEPHENSON